

He interrupted the journey in different places. In Turnhout in Belgium he visited the apostolic school there, since the mission house in Steyl would be an apostolic school. “Near Turnhout the apostolic students have a field with a small garden hut to walk and to stay in during the holidays. When will we have something like that, I thought” (ibid.).

Fr. Bill went on to Louvain “where I stopped at the place of the Fathers of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary. They were also good friends of Fr. Arnold and his foundation (in particular Fr. Bund...)” (ibid.). To this Fr. Bund, Fr. Arnold wrote on June 9, 1875: “On 16 June the spiritual foundation of the project will, perhaps, be laid through a certain vow”(Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 67).

On **June 13**, Fr. Arnold wrote once again to Fr. Bill:

“I received your letter with the sales contract which probably will be concluded on June 16. With permission of my confessor I intend at the same time to make the enclosed vow on that day; I must leave it up to you if, and in which way, you want to do it and how you may want to think about the wording of the vow.

By the way, I hope that we will be able to consider June 16 as the birthday of our project and that we will be able to receive for it a bit from the treasure of those graces which this memorable day will pour upon the church” (Peter Bill, *Korrespondenz Bill- A. Janssen - Reichart und andere* [Correspondence Bill-A. Janssen- Reichart and others], unpublished manuscript, p. 3).

By this time the preparations for the founding of the mission house had progressed so far that Fr. Arnold advertised for personnel in the June 1875 issue of the *Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote* [Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart]:

*Regarding the mission house, which will be acquired on Dutch soil and which hopefully will be opened very shortly, we hope to say more soon. Already now the information that the mission house will need service personnel for garden, kitchen, trades and the buying of food. Applications will be received by the editor of this magazine.*

*To all sisters and brothers  
in the Arnoldus Family  
a blessed and joyous Christmas season!*



## The Arnoldus Family Story

**MAY/JUNE 1875 -**

**PROGRESS ON THE WAY TO THE FOUNDING OF THE MISSION HOUSE**

### Correspondence

On **May 12, 1875** when Arnold Janssen was travelling through Germany and Austria in order to get the Bishops' recommendations for the new mission house, Fr. Peter Bill, parish priest in Luxemburg, wrote to Fr. Arnold telling him of his heart's desire to put his “poor person completely at the disposal of the future mission house.”

On **May 27, 1875** Fr. Arnold sent this reply to Fr. Bill:

“Dear Confrere,

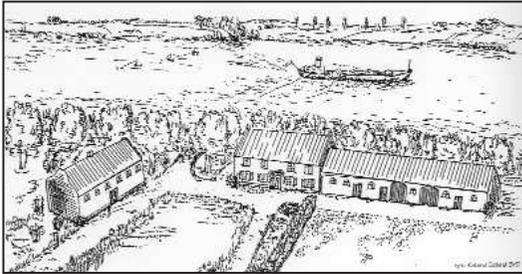
*I just received your letter after returning home from a four-week trip in connection with the mission house. Since I hope to begin on 16 June in the parish of Tegelen, diocese of Roermond (in Dutch Limburg), half an hour from Venlo, three and a half hours from here [Kempen], I would like you to come over next Monday, 31 May or Tuesday, June 1 - please confirm this immediately - so that we can get to know each other and you can perhaps advise me regarding the setting up of the house. Enclosed find the blessing of the Apostolic See and the recommendation of the whole Dutch hierarchy as well as of the most prominent German and Austrian bishops”* (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 64). Fr. Arnold then advised Fr. Bill about the cheapest way of travelling and he also mentions various train connections from Luxemburg to Kempen with the arrival and departure times at and from the stations where the trains stop on their way to Kempen. He concludes the letter with the words: “*With cordial greetings, at the moment of an imminent small journey, Yours sincerely, A. Janssen*” (Peter Bill, *Korrespondenz* [correspondence] Bill-A. Janssen - Reichart - andere [others], unpublished manuscript, pp. 2-3)

Fr. Arnold did not say where he was going to travel to. However, years later he told Fr. Reinke: “At that time - I think it was at the beginning of June 1875 - shortly after my return from my long journey, I went also for consultation in Roermond. I then took the procurator of the Episcopal college along to Steyl to have a look at the house and property of Nik. Ronck” (AJ - Reinke, *Erinnerungen* [memories] 3347). Fr. Arnold had been in contact with Mr. Ronck already since March 1875. For on March 22, 1875 he had written to Rev. Prof. Moubis who had participated in the negotiations concerning the “de Munt” property: “This morning I will travel from here to the middle of Holland and

hope to return on Tuesday evening or Wednesday about noon in order to negotiate with Mr. Ronck and you” (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 61 – see also “The Arnoldus Family Story, July 2010).

In the meantime it was “the beginning of June 1875”. The house at which Fr. Arnold had a look together with the procurator of the Episcopal college in Roermond and which he eventually bought, “was situated opposite the church in Steyl; in earlier times it had been an inn which had flourished very much at the time that the trains did not go via Kaldenkirchen. At that time many carts and lorries came daily from Kaldenkirchen to Steyl in order to load coal, lime and stones which had come on steamships from Namur and Liege [Belgium]. Mr. Ronck owned yet another building

at the side of his inn, the so called storehouse, just for storing lime and which, therefore, had pretty strong, thick walls. This I bought as well...however with the condition that it would pass into our possession only after some time; then I would also pay the amount of purchase” (AJ – Reinke, *Erinnerungen* [memoirs], 3348).



On **June 4, 1875** John Baptist Anzer, seminarian of the Diocese of Regensburg / Germany, answered a letter which Fr. Arnold had written to him earlier. From Anzer’s letter we can conclude that at that time Fr. Arnold had decided on making a vow on June 16, through which the “spiritual foundation” of the new mission house was to be laid. Anzer wrote:

“I am fully of your opinion and I will also begin a novena on June 7 and at the end of it, on June 16, I will also make the vow to consecrate myself for ever to the mission work and at first, at least for three years, I will dedicate myself to the apostolic school for Germany which is to be founded. That, however, I do with the following modifications:

1) the vow will only have final validity when, on my second application, the Most Rev. Bishop of Regensburg gives me permission to join you;

2) when I get some support, even if it is not all that significant, for my mother and sisters. These are two conditions the fulfillment of which for me will be at the same time an outward confirmation of my missionary vocation. For that I pray and I will particularly pray for that intention in the novena which will begin on June 7, that God may give a favorable outcome of those two conditions, if it is His will that I should become a missionary and a member of your foundation, and an unfavorable one if it is not His will.

I will place myself totally at the disposal of the Divine Heart, I do not wish to keep anything for myself. Therefore I can hope that the Divine Heart in its infinite mercy will graciously look down on my lowliness and that it will not let me err in my choice of status. And if it is really the will of this Most Sacred Heart that I join you, it will give me

the strength and the means to overcome those huge difficulties which stand in the way and of which you may only have a vague idea.

By the way, I tell you openly that I would rather have many difficulties in my choice of status than none at all. Well, the reasons are clear.

Finally, I still want to ask your Reverence for a memento at holy Mass during the novena and in particular on June 16” (Johannes B. Anzer, *Briefe aus dem Jahre 1875 an Arnold Janssen* [Letters of Anzer to Arnold Janssen from the year 1875], *Verbum* 3, 1961, pp. 62-63).

### The Sales Contract

Arnold Janssen expected Fr. Bill in Kempen on May 31 or June 1. However, because of the octave of Corpus Christi, Fr. Bill was unable to leave his parish at that time, and so Fr. Arnold invited him to come to Kempen on June 7. On the evening of June 8, so Fr. Bill writes in his memoirs, Fr. Janssen suggested “to me, to go the next day to Steyl and to buy the house on his behalf provisionally; he gave me a written sales contract which Mr. Ronck had only to sign. I strongly opposed this idea, made several objections, I do not know the house; it was still not clear if this area was a suitable place for the mission house; I myself would have had it rather ... in or near a town with schools. However, I finally gave in and obeyed blindly without looking at further difficulties. I therefore bought the house provisionally for 4500 Thaler. The house did not seem to me to be too expensive; it had a medium sized garden and a somewhat larger garden with trees nearby; .... It was **June 9, 1875** (Peter Bill, *Erinnerungen* [memoirs], unpublished manuscript, p. 18).

The sales contract contained the following conditions:

1. The house must be vacated in June of this year, at the latest in July.
2. The garden fruits still growing on the day the house is vacated are included in the sale; also the garden, courtyard, orchard, hedges and other parts belonging to the property.
3. The legal sale transaction will take place as soon as it is definitely determined what kind of private or legal person the owner will be and such entered into the title deed and land register. Simultaneously, the purchaser will pay in cash. Until then, the seller and Arnold Janssen remain mutually responsible.
4. If Arnold Janssen requires it, the storehouse and the attached part of the garden must be handed over to him for two thousand guilders, payable in German currency at the rate of seventeen silver pieces per guilder.
5. This is subject to the approval of the parish priest of Neuwerk near Moenchenglöblich, Dr. von Essen, whose decision will be made known in a few days” (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 66).

Fr. Bill “sent the signed sales contract which, after a certain period of time stated in it, should become definitive... to Fr. Janssen in Kempen” and on the same day he began his return journey to Luxemburg via Holland and Belgium (Peter Bill, *Erinnerungen* [memoirs], p. 18).